

Old Santa Fe Inn gets revamp; hotel rebranded to Piñon Court

By Matthew Narvaiz mnarvaiz@sfnewmexican.com Jun 17, 2024 Updated 2 hrs ago  0

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Danielle Auckerman, general manager of the Old Santa Fe Inn, walks through one of the newly remodeled rooms at the hotel Monday, June 17, 2024. The hotel will soon change its name to Piñon Court after a major project that saw 41 out of 58 rooms renovated.

Luis Sánchez Saturno/The New Mexican

The scents of fresh paint and new flooring wafted through the Old Santa Fe Inn on Monday morning.

The property, listed on the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Historic Hotels of America, is undergoing an extensive renovation and rebranding effort that is aimed at not only upgrading rooms and other spaces but also changing how guests think of the downtown hotel.

As part of the makeover, general manager Danielle Auckerman said, the hotel's name will change in the next few days to Piñon Court.

The new name is tied to a newly planted piñon tree at the property's entrance. "It's kind of a representation of who we're trying to be," Auckerman said.

Guests can expect to see 41 of the property's 58 guest rooms remodeled with new vinyl wood-look flooring, new bedding and refurbished bathrooms. Hallways, too, have been spruced up with new carpet.

"They wanted to really upgrade it and put it on the same level as La Fonda [on the Plaza] so that the guests over at La Fonda could have a more affordable option while still having that great feel to it," said Auckerman, who has served as general manager since February.

The recent changes come after the opening earlier this year of Bistro and Lounge, a new dining concept at the property.

The Old Santa Fe Inn, 201 Montezuma Ave., was acquired in 2022 by Cienda Partners and Bentley Legacy Holdings, which also own La Fonda, according to previous reports. The newly rebranded Piñon Court now falls under the La Fonda Hospitality Group, created last year to manage a growing collection of properties.

The hotel building traces its roots back decades, with the Barker family, the previous owner of the property, turning the space into a hotel in 2003. The Barker family acquired it in 1991, when it was an office complex.

The recent renovations, Auckerman said, came at a cost of \$2.5 million, including the bistro. The construction was led by Allied Construction Group based in New Jersey, and design was done by Mendil + Meyer Design Studio in Arizona.

The addition of the bistro began last fall and was completed earlier this year. The eatery serves a "New Mexican-based menu but also things like flatbreads, salads, burgers," Auckerman said. It seats 40 people inside and 30 people outside.

Room renovations finished quickly, with construction beginning in March and finishing up earlier this month.

There are plans for other improvements and additions. By 2026, there will be updated furniture throughout the property, Auckerman said, and its owners are looking into the addition of EV chargers as more people, including guests, switch to electric vehicles.